



LOOKING BACK

20 and Counting: Celebrating 20 Years of Acupuncture Today and the Evolution of AOM

Marilyn Allen, Editor at Large | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

There is a saying, "There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come." *Acupuncture Today* was one of those ideas. Over the past 20 years, *Acupuncture Today* has helped bring news and information to AOM practitioners throughout the United States ... and now, with a digital edition, throughout the world.

Jan. 1, 2000 marked the very first issue of *Acupuncture Today*. During that time, our profession has seen many changes and significant growth - and *AT* has been there every step of the way. As we begin our 21st year of publication, let's take a year-by-year walk together down Memory Lane and review some of the events that have shaped the profession, as reported in the pages of *Acupuncture Today*.

2000

Acupuncture Today publishes its inaugural issue, with Michael Devitt serving as the first managing editor. I've been teaching at schools for 10 years, and am recruited as *AT*'s editor-at-large to ensure the publication addresses the topics and issues most important to our practitioners and profession.



Among the events shaping the year 2000, three acupuncturists are [appointed](#) to the first White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy. The Supreme Court upholds Washington state's historic "[alternative provider](#)" [law](#), which requires insurance carriers to provide access to all types of providers licensed or certified under state law.

2001

Congress [increases funding](#) for complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) research by \$20 million. The National Institutes of Health launches a [CAM database](#) on PubMed. Harvard University receives a \$10 million donation [to study](#) alternative medicine. *Acupuncture Today's* website is [featured](#) on a national TV series as a reliable source of reliable information about acupuncture. One of the first [discussions](#) of how colored light therapy can interface with acupuncture takes place.

2002

The University of Virginia receives a [\\$2.2 million grant](#) to study echinacea. California Assemblywoman Judy Chu sponsors Assembly Bill 1943, which [raises the hours](#) in California to 3,000 in order to complete acupuncture school. Then-Gov. Gray Davis signs the bill. The NCCAOM receives [full accreditation](#) for its Asian bodywork therapy program from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. National organizations [launch a campaign](#) to declare Oct. 24 "Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day."

2003

Acupuncture Today passes [2 million hits](#) to its website in one month, including nearly 66,000 unique visits. A [special edition](#) of *Newsweek* magazine explores the science of alternative medicine and features acupuncture on the cover. [HIPAA regulations](#) begin to impact the profession (and all health professions - a topic I discuss in my column throughout the year). NCCAOM [publishes its](#)

[first](#) *Job Analysis of the Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Profession*.

2004

ACAOM convenes a task force to [develop standards](#) for entry-level doctoral programs. The FDA issues a final ruling on ephedra. Discussions about getting more patients from the web are increasingly popular. The Little Hoover Commission publishes [an analysis](#) of the acupuncture profession in the state of California. Oriental medicine is discussed as an [essential element](#) of integrative oncology care.

2005

The American Medical Association [introduces new](#) CPT codes for acupuncture. South Carolina's [licensure bill](#) is signed into law. The National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) celebrates [20 years](#). Dr. Will Morris [discusses](#) the importance of leadership and service. The ACAOM Doctoral Task Force issues its [final report](#).

2006

The U.S. Department of Education reconfirms ACAOM as the accrediting agency for acupuncture schools. The World Health Organization standardizes [acupuncture point locations](#) and develops a list of vocabulary terms. Michigan and Kentucky enact licensure laws. Acupuncturists are treating patients on [cruise ships](#).

2007

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [issues a report](#) on pain management. Acupuncturists in Pennsylvania [no longer need](#) a physician referral. The Society for Acupuncture Research [celebrates 10 years](#) of acupuncture research advances. The Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance (AOM Alliance) and the American Association of Oriental Medicine (AAOM) [merge](#) to become the present-day AAAOM. The FDA publishes its [final rule](#) on current good manufacturing practices (GMPs) for dietary supplements; Chinese herbs get a boost.

2008

The first blind acupuncturist in the U.S. [attains a license](#) in Texas. The NCCAOM begins work on [obtaining recognition](#) from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics for acupuncturists. The Olympic Village in Beijing [offers acupuncture](#) to athletes for first time. ACAOM completes the first draft for doctoral studies in the U.S. in the field of acupuncture and traditional medicine. A character in an episode of the hit TV show "Private Practice" [reads an issue](#) of *Acupuncture Today*.

2009

Complementary and alternative medicine [is recognized](#) by the World Health Organization at a meeting in Beijing. Acupuncture is [highlighted](#) at the American Public Health Association conference. Yo San University [partners](#) with Children's Hospital Los Angeles to offer acupuncture to pediatric patients. The San Francisco Giants (Major League Baseball) add an [acupuncturist](#) to their health staff.

2010

The first step is taken in creating a classification for traditional medicine with the World Health Organization. The U.S. Army Surgeon General [recommends](#) acupuncture for pain management.

Creating a marketing blueprint for acupuncture practice growth is a [hot topic](#). President Obama signs [health reform](#) legislation – the Affordable Care Act.

2011

One of *Acupuncture Today's* columnists [wins gold](#) for Best Contributed Column in the prestigious Western Regional Azbee Awards of Excellence competition. Texas College of Traditional Chinese Medicine [announces](#) a dual master's degree program. [Pet acupuncture](#) is highlighted in a feature article.

2012

Acupuncture gains popularity nationwide at [hospitals](#). International Classification of Diseases 10th version (ICD-10) [code changes](#) impact acupuncturists. Actor Robert Downey Jr. is [honored](#) for his advocacy of traditional Chinese medicine. Anthem Blue Cross increases [diagnosis codes](#) for acupuncture benefits.

2013

The PCOM Symposium celebrates 25 years. Patient-centered care is a buzzword for the first time. Acupuncturists [respond](#) in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing. The definition of a health care provider is established. The International Standards Organization – Technical Committee 249 holds its first plenary session in Beijing [to develop](#) international standards for TCM. *Acupuncture Today* [visits China](#).

2014

Six states remain [without any type](#) of acupuncture regulation. Colorado is developing the first [acupuncture](#) Medical Reserve Corps in the U.S. *Acupuncture Today* [makes history](#) in the prestigious FOLIO publishing awards competition.

2015

Texas veterans with PTSD are first treated with acupuncture. The American Society of Acupuncture [begins to impact](#) the profession. [TCM congress](#) in Germany is largest in Western world. Nobel Prize co-winners turn to [TCM](#) for award-winning research. Emperor's College [treats athletes](#) at the Special Olympics in Los Angeles.

2016

[Interprofessionalism](#) is becoming more important. Amy Sear teaches [ethics](#) and NCCAOM holds an ethics symposium. The AOM profession mourns the loss of [Richard Tan](#). The herbal medicine program at Cleveland Clinic [gains traction](#). *Acupuncture Today* launches its [digital edition](#). Kansas acupuncturists finally get [licensing law](#).

2017

Five Branches University offers the first hospital-based [TCM residency](#). Wyoming becomes the 47th state to [regulate](#) acupuncture. U.S. Attorneys General [ask insurers](#) to cover acupuncture and other non-opioid alternatives for pain relief.

2018

The Department of Veterans Affairs declares acupuncture [a profession](#), not a modality, and

announces new opportunities. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health's (NCCIH) [new director](#) backs acupuncture. The Institute for Economic Review [recommends](#) insurers cover acupuncture for chronic low back pain.

2019

A study reveals acupuncture is the top integrative health service Americans [want to try](#). The dry needling debate [heats up](#). The NCCAOM gets a [new CEO](#), Mina Larson. (A huge thank you goes to Kory Ward-Cook for all of her work and accomplishments during her tenure at NCCAOM.) The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) asks for opinions as to whether acupuncture should be included in Medicare, and requests a study for further investigation.

If there is a moral to the first 20 years of this story, it's that this wonderful medicine and the people who deliver it have certainly accomplished a lot over the past 20 years - but we still have much further to go. As always, *Acupuncture Today* will be with you throughout your journey. Let's see what the next 20 years brings!

JANUARY 2020